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October 27, 1959

**MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT**  
October 27, 1959 -- 3:00 PM

Others present: Secretary Herter  
Secretary Merchant  
Major Eisenhower



The President opened by commenting on the October 26th letter from President de Gaulle stating that putting off the Western summit meeting as late as December 19th would represent a stalling operation, that much work should be done between now and then to determine where we are going, and at least what subjects should be agreed on. Mr. Herter mentioned the Ministerial meeting of NATO in December and said he thought the President might desire to review our military posture in the light of our balance of payments situation between now and then. The Secretary is planning to come in next week to discuss this matter.

The President denied that concern over balance of payments is his alone, but is the concern of all the U.S. He expressed some impatience with Europeans who use the U.S. as a crutch when it serves their convenience. He has no objection to the equal partnership concept, but expressed irritation at everybody's pursuing his independent ways. He quoted the original concept that a unified command in Europe constituted the only justification for deployment of U.S. forces on that continent. Possibly identical letters to de Gaulle, Macmillan and Adenauer, pointing out the original 1951 concept and questioning where we go from here, might be useful. Possibly we should face them with the choice of paying the costs of our military forces on their soil or face a reduction. Mr. Herter said he was sure they would prefer to pick up the costs rather than face further pullouts.

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The conference then turned to the President's specific schedule. The current dissatisfaction of Spaak with an alleged lack of communication between Western governments and the NATO Council was considered. Spaak apparently feels that there are substantive discussions going on

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between governments whereas in fact our discussions have been procedural only. Also considered was de Gaulle's schedule which requires him to go to Senegal on December 10th and 11th. The NATO meeting will be held from December 15th to 17th, and Adenauer and de Gaulle will meet on November 17th. Adenauer will visit Paris on December 1st. A factor pointed out by Mr. Merchant is that a Western summit held right after a NATO meeting might make the NATO meeting seem empty. The idea of asking Spaak to hold the Ministerial meeting in January was considered but discounted, since the opening of Parliaments in several nations would make the absence of their Ministers extremely difficult. With regard to the delay, the President pointed out that he will no longer get headlines after July 1, 1960. Therefore, while he himself might retain some usefulness for good will trips, his position in substantive discussions would be weakened by the question, "What will your successor do?" Mr. Merchant said he thinks de Gaulle is stalling for time to allow himself to develop an atomic bomb prior to the conference. He wants to be a "member of the club." The President said it should be no feat to explode an atomic bomb by this time.

The President said a meeting on December 19th would give him the excuse to make a visit including Rabat, Rome, Athens, Ankara, Tehran, Karachi and New Delhi. If possible, he should see Bourguiba. The stop at Rome would probably have to come after the Western summit meeting. He said he would not be pressured into attending the NATO Ministerial meeting. Mr. Herter said that if the President felt up to making a trip of this nature, it would be worth postponing a summit meeting for. He also said that the stop in Rome would practically eliminate Italian pressure for inclusion in Four-Power meetings. The President said it would not be possible to visit the Far East but agreed with Mr. Herter's idea that he might leave the Soviet Union by Vladivostok and touch down in Japan on the way out. As a final requirement, he stated he does not wish the President and the Vice President to be out of the country at the same time.

As a result of this discussion, Mr. Herter was directed to plan for December 19th as the tentative date for a Western summit meeting, but also to inform the British and French governments of our views with regard to a necessity for speed. We should arrange for a meeting between the State Department and the British and French Ambassadors in Washington, to chart the direction we should take, particularly to agree on an agenda for a Western summit meeting.

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In connection with the President's schedule, there is a concern that Khrushchev will conclude that we are stalling. The President said he is trying to be honest with Khrushchev, in spirit as well as in the letter of agreements. He did, however, at Camp David, tell Khrushchev to expect him to have some difficulty with his allies in arranging a summit schedule. The President expressed the desire to get these matters back into diplomatic channels since direct contact between himself and de Gaulle by letter seemed to be producing little results. The French are apparently attempting to lay out the schedule for everybody, to include the Western summit in December, a Khrushchev visit to France in January, and an East-West summit in March. Possibly the French desire to test the amount of support they would get from the USSR on the Algerian question before a summit meeting. Mr. Herter said that Ambassador Houghton, while willing to cut short his stay in the U.S. and return to France at any time, insisted on his own inadequacy in making any headway with de Gaulle. The President agreed and said that de Gaulle might not even see the Ambassador.

In connection with this discussion, an increased role for Ambassador Thompson was mentioned. It is expected that Thompson will be able to establish a closer liaison with Khrushchev and should make clear to Khrushchev the difficulties which we are having with our allies in avoiding unnecessary delay.

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Mr. Herter then brought up the matter of Cuba, which is extremely uncomfortable at this time. Justice, Defense, and State are working together, attempting to stop the activities of counterrevolutionaries working out of Florida. These efforts are handicapped by the fact that private planes fly out of 200 airfields in the State of Florida alone; furthermore, our laws on this subject are weak and it is nearly impossible to obtain convictions. He pointed out that the Air National Guard and Governor Collins of Florida are being very helpful. Collins does not desire that Florida develop a reputation as a hotbed of counterrevolutionaries. The President thought we could take some measure such as stationing inspectors at major airfields, but admitted it was impossible to police them all. He questioned why the Cubans don't just shoot the airplanes down. Mr. Herter said that the Cubans have

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been behaving very badly, particularly in connection with the Lanz case. Bonsal is talking to President Dorticos today. Bonsal cannot obtain an audience with Castro.

Mr. Herter showed the President a statement which Bonsal will use in his discussion with Dorticos. The President read the statement and said this matter may come up in press conference tomorrow.

*John S. D. Eisenhower*  
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